

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method for manufacturing and assembling hot runner systems, the method comprising the steps of:

manufacturing a plurality of manifold plates for hot runner systems;

adding heating elements to the manifold plates;

drilling flow channels into the manifold plates to thereby create a plurality of partially manufactured hot runner manifold plates;

creating an inventory of [placing the] partially manufactured hot runner manifold plates [in stock];

taking an order[s] with customized specifications for a hot runner system[s];

removing from inventory [stock the] a partially manufactured hot runner manifold plate[s], injection nozzles, and plugs that correspond to the customized specifications of the order[s];

boring out holes for the plugs in the partially manufactured hot runner manifold plate[s] at locations that correspond to the customized specifications of the order[s];

inserting the plugs into the bored out holes of the partially manufactured hot runner manifold plate[s]; and

attaching the nozzles to the partially manufactured hot runner manifold plate[s] in alignment with the plugs to thereby create a completed hot runner system.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the customized specifications comprise

at least one of nozzle types, nozzle pitches, manifold shapes, manifold lengths, and manifold thickness.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of milling grooves in the manifold plates and inserting the heating elements into the grooves.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of grinding the manifold plates to dimensions that correspond to the specifications of the orders.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of drilling holes in the manifold plates around the bored out holes for attaching the nozzles to the manifold plates.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of boring out slots for alignment pins in the manifold plates next to the bored out holes.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of aligning plug channels of the plugs with the flow channels of the manifold plates.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of aligning plug channels of the plugs with the flow channels of the manifold plates and melt channels of the nozzles.
9. (Currently amended) A method for manufacturing and assembling hot runner systems, the

method comprising the steps of:

manufacturing a plurality of manifold plates for hot runner systems;

[milling grooves in the manifold plates];

drilling flow channels into the manifold plates to thereby create a plurality of partially manufactured manifold plates;

[inserting heating elements into the grooves];

creating an inventory of partially manufactured [placing the] manifold plates [in stock];

taking an order[s] with customized specifications for a hot runner system[s];

removing from inventory [stock the] a partially manufactured manifold plate[s], injection nozzles, and plugs that correspond to the customized specifications of the order[s];

adding heating elements to the partially manufactured manifold plate;

boring out holes for the plugs in the partially manufactured manifold plate[s] at locations that correspond to the customized specifications of the order[s];

drilling holes in the partially manufactured manifold plate[s] around the bored out holes for attaching the nozzles to the manifold plate[s];

inserting the plugs into the bored out holes of the partially manufactured manifold plate[s]; and

attaching the nozzles to the partially manufactured manifold plate[s] in alignment with the plugs to thereby create a completed hot runner system.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9 wherein the customized specifications comprise

at least one of nozzle types, nozzle pitches, manifold shapes, manifold lengths, and manifold thickness.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9 further comprising the step of grinding the manifold plates to dimensions that correspond to the specifications of the orders.

12. (Original) The method of claim 9 further comprising the step of boring out slots for alignment pins in the manifold plates next to the bored out holes.

13. (Original) The method of claim 9 further comprising the step of aligning plug channels of the plugs with the flow channels of the manifold plates.

14. (Original) The method of claim 9 further comprising the step of aligning plug channels of the plugs with the flow channels of the manifold plates and melt channels of the nozzles.

Claims 15-20 (cancelled).

21. (Currently amended) A method for manufacturing and assembling hot runner systems, the method comprising the steps of:

partially manufacturing a plurality of hot runner components to include partially manufactured manifold plates that form at least a portion of a hot runner system in a first phase;
placing the hot runner components in inventory [stock];

receiving an order with customized specifications for a hot runner system;
removing the hot runner components from inventory [stock]; and
further manufacturing the hot runner components in accordance with the
customized specifications of the order in a second phase.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21 wherein the specifications comprise at least one of nozzle types, nozzle pitches, manifold shapes, manifold lengths, and manifold thickness.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21 [wherein the molding components comprise a manifold plate, and] further comprising the step of milling a groove in the manifold plate and inserting a heating element into the groove.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21 [wherein the molding components comprise a manifold plate, and] further comprising the step of grinding the manifold plate to dimensions that correspond to the specifications of the order.

25. (Currently amended) The method of claim 21 further comprising the step of assembling the [molding] partially manufactured manifold plates with a heater assembly [components] into an incomplete hot runner system in the first phase.

26. (Currently amended) The method of claim 25 further comprising the step of further assembling the partially manufactured manifold plates with other hot runner [molding]

components into a complete hot runner system in accordance with the customized specifications of the order in the second phase.
